

21 October 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Messrs. [redacted] Office of
Research and Reports

SUBJECT: Request for Background Material by Mr. William Benton

1. On 20 October 1955, [redacted]

Mr. Benton asked whether CIA could supply him with background material for an article he will write later this fall for the Encyclopaedia Britannica's Yearbook.

2. The subject of this article is the effectiveness of propaganda and indoctrination in the Soviet Union and the Satellites. Mr. Benton was particularly interested in obtaining any already-worked-up data of an unclassified nature that the Agency has on the following activities in each of the countries in question: Press, Movies, Sports, Education, Religion, and the Arts. To illustrate what he wants, he cited the following data pertaining to the Press: number of newspapers, circulation, and content of a typical issue of Pravda. He also cited, as illustrative, the material in a recent speech of the DCI on the extent of the training of engineers and other specialists in the Soviet Union. Generally, he seems to want aggregative data on number of institutions of leading types in each of the fields mentioned (newspapers, periodicals, movie theatres, churches, schools, etc.), aggregative data on numbers of people reached by the various media or associated with the various activities (circulation or readership of various papers and periodicals, movie attendance, membership in churches, etc.), and particulars on the functioning of a typical unit (what an average newspaper or periodical looks like, what a typical church service or session of school is like, how a sports club is run, etc.).

3. Mr. Benton asked that this material be in the hands of Mr. Robert Tucker of the RAND corporation by the end of Saturday, 22 October 1955. Or, if this proved impossible, that it be sent when ready to Mr. Robert Blake of State.

4. Mr. Benton said he would make the request officially to the DCI. Hence Messrs. [redacted] are taking no further action.

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